

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5240

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2625

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: PEN PRISONER ACCOUNTING PROBLEMS

1. ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE HAS NOT YET BEEN
RAISED PUBLICLY BY ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS
ORGANIZATIONS, WE ARE BECOMING CONCERNED
THAT THE NUMBER OF PEN PRISONERS IDENTIFIED
BY THE GOA MIGHT FALL (OR APPEAR TO FALL)
SHORT OF THE PEN PRISONER POPULATION OF 3607
ANNOUNCED LAST CHRISTMAS BY THE GOA.

2. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS TOLD
EMBASSY RECENTLY THAT ONE OR TWO MORE SHORT
PEN PRISONER LISTS WILL BE ISSUED IN NEAR
FUTURE COVERING PEN PRISONERS HELD IN REMAINING
PROVINCIAL PENITENTIARIES. MININT OFFICIALS
ADMIT THAT COMPARING THE TOTALS OF PEN
PRISON LISTS WITH ANNOUNCED CHRISTMAS NUMBER
OF 3607 WOULD BE DIFFICULT AS PRISON LISTS
PRESENT THE NAMES OF PEN PRISONERS HELD IN A PENAL
FACILITY APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.
THUS, PRISON NAME LISTS ARE NOT A STATIC REPORT TIED
TO CHRISTMAS TIME PEN POPULATION, BUT REFLECT ALL CURRENT
ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS TO PEN PRISONER POPULATION.

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3. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S STATIC CALCULATIONS BASED
ON MININT'S PEN STATISTICS, THERE ARE OVER 200 NAMES OF
PEN PRISONERS STILL TO BE RELEASED. THE PUBLICLY
ANNOUNCED PEN PRISONER POPULATION AS OF CHRISTMAS 1977
WAS 3607. SUBTRACTING THE 221 PRISONERS RELEASED, DEPORTED,
OR OPTIONED FROM THEN THROUGH THE END OF MARCH, LEAVES
3386 PERSONS FROM CHRISTMAS LIST STILL UNDER PEN. THE

GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THE NAMES OF 3151 PRISONERS WHICH LEAVES ABOUT 235 PRISONERS TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE NEXT PRISONER LISTS. THE ACCOUNTING PROBLEM IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT ANOTHER 243 PRISONERS HAVE BEEN PLACED UNDER THE PEN SINCE CHRISTMAS AND SOME OF THESE NAMES MAY HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PEN PRISON LISTS.

4. WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY EXACT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF PEN PRISONERS AND THE TOTALS OF THE PRISON LISTS, IF THE TOTAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRISON LISTS DO NOT COME CLOSE TO THE CHRISTMAS TOTAL, THIS COULD BECOME AN ISSUE HERE AND ABROAD.
CASTRO

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